



## One Mission, One Voice

Serving Victims Of Domestic Violence Since 1978.

### Budgeting For Results Commission

Senator Kotowski and other members of the Commission:

I am submitting these comments on behalf of the Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence (ICADV), a membership advocacy organization comprised of over 50 agencies around Illinois that respond to domestic violence victims and their dependents. ICADV is an active member of the Illinois Partners for Human Services.

Thank you for the opportunity to present a statement about the work of all the providers in Illinois funded by the Department of Human Services. It has been very difficult to operate effectively for the last three years given the political and economic climate. And it isn't just the budget reductions that are harmful. The agonizingly long waits to receive funds for services already provided and the uncertainty from year to year of contracts and funding make it almost impossible to operate an agency with any sense of stability or efficiency.

For victims of domestic violence this is especially true. Individuals arrive at a domestic violence services agency knowing only that they need immediate safety and are in crisis. If the agency that is responding to them is also in constant state of crisis, it is very difficult to help the victims develop a safety plan for long term stability. Domestic violence victims are in need of many things: safe, affordable housing; jobs and job training; education for themselves and their children; health care and mental health services for themselves and their children; advocacy with criminal justice professionals and with family court; food and clothing. So where will they turn as these services are constantly reduced here in Illinois both by budget cuts and by lack of prompt payment? Unfortunately the only place many of them can turn to is the abusive situation they attempted to leave.

It is critical that this Commission make a clear statement to the Governor and to the Legislature that by focusing budget cuts on Human Services they are setting up a future of failure for many more of its Illinois citizens than we are currently seeing. This is truly a situation of being penny wise and many pounds foolish.

The philosophy statement below was a collaborative effort of the members of the Illinois Department of Human Services Domestic Violence Advisory Committee (DVAC) combined Request For Proposal (RFP) and Outcomes Committees. These two committees have been working for months on recommendations for an RFP process and for measurable outcomes for domestic violence victims' services. The recommendations were presented to the whole DVAC on September 8. The participants of the committees were from all over the state and see victims of domestic violence and their dependents in a variety of forums and service venues. It is important to understand



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this services philosophy in order to understand how to measure the success of services provided to domestic violence victims and their dependents.

### **PRIMARY UNDERLYING PHILOSOPHY FOR RESPONDING TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS**

One in four women will be abused during their lifetime. Three women a day are murdered in the United States by an intimate partner or an ex-partner. And yet intimate partner homicides make up about half of all murders of women in the United States and in the vast majority (70-80%) of those homicides, no matter which partner was killed, the man physically abused the woman before the murder.<sup>i</sup>

Why do we need domestic violence agencies? In Illinois there are women and children homeless and hopeless because they can't live with the man who beats and rapes them. In so many communities, battered women are turned away from homeless shelters and other agencies because there is no room for them.

Why do we need domestic violence agencies? Domestic violence touches all the residents of Illinois, even if one is not directly a victim or an abuser. It fills our emergency rooms and our morgues. It keeps employees from being able to work. It makes children fearful and interferes with their ability to learn. It contributes to crime on our streets. It destroys homes and families. We all know these victims. They are our friends, our sisters, our daughters, our grandmothers, our neighbors, our coworkers, our constituents.

Why do we need domestic violence agencies? Because victims continue to be blamed for the violent crimes perpetrated against them. Why does she stay? Why doesn't she just leave him? We cannot ignore the bone-chilling facts that each day a woman is beaten every nine seconds and seventy five percent of serious injuries happened to battered women as they try to leave or after they have gone. We need services for domestic violence victims because leaving is the single most dangerous thing a battered woman can do. We need shelters because abusers use many tools to manipulate, terrorize and entrap their victims. These behaviors include financial, emotional, religious and psychological tactics. Isolation and constant threats are used to reinforce the fear created by occasional uses of physical violence. This combination of violent behaviors is referred to as gender-based violence regardless of the gender of the person that is maintaining power and control over family members. Gender-based violence is supported in our society by acceptance of "might equals right" and antiquated beliefs of male ownership of wives and children as chattel.



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The financial demands of ending domestic violence are great, but the negative impact of domestic violence is greater. The economic impact of providing survivors services is minimal when compared to the long-term cost of investigating and prosecuting these crimes, the medical care costs for injuries suffered at the hands of abusers, and the lost wages and productivity due to the physical and emotional trauma experienced by survivors. In 2003, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimated that national health care costs directly related to domestic violence totaled over \$4 billion and almost \$2 billion in productivity losses due to injuries and premature death.<sup>ii</sup> When a victim isn't able to access safety and is killed at the hands of her batterer, the homicide case may cost a community as much as \$173,000: \$2,400 to clean up the murder site; \$7,445 for a casket and funeral; \$2,500 for an autopsy; \$5,600 for law enforcement costs; \$45,000 for a trial; \$111,000 for a sentence of (only) five years in prison.<sup>iii</sup>

Services offered by domestic violence agencies to battered women are safe, accessible spaces for protection, safety planning, support and education. These community-based agencies are available twenty-four hours a day, 365 days a year. Victims and their children need shelter, counseling, advocacy and respectful support. The focus of those services is to offer alternatives, and to help parents and children to reduce the violence in their lives.

The network of agencies that provide services to domestic violence victims and their children grew out of a variety of civil rights movements. The ending violence against women movement evolved from meetings and discussions mostly peopled by women who discovered that they had common experiences of physical, sexual and psychological violence at the hands of family members and life partners.

Programs that are most beneficial to domestic violence victims and their children provide a combination of 24 hour accessibility, shelter, counseling and advocacy based on the individual victim's circumstances and needs. The focus of these services is designed to help parents and their children learn to be a family without the constant threat of violence. The time needed and combination of services required is dependent on what is available in the community and how persistent the abuser is in trying to keep control of the family.

Primarily domestic violence victims' services are always available just like your local fire department. And just like the fire department you cannot wait until a crisis occurs to fund or support the services for victims. We would not want our local fire station to only be staffed according to how many fires occurred last fiscal year. You need the fire department when there is a fire. Victims need the local services available when they need them, which is when they are in danger or feel threatened by their abuser. We



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must make sure that the full range of services is available at all times for victims and their dependents

i Campbell, J.C., Webster, D., Koziol-McLain, J., Block, C.R., Campbell, D., Curry, M.A., F. Gary, ...Wilt, S.A. (2003, November). Assessing risk factors for intimate partner homicide. *NIJ Journal*, 250, 14-19. NCJ 196547.

ii Data retrieved from the 2003 Center for Disease Control report Cost of Intimate Partner Violence Against Women in the United States. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control.

iii Figures are based on data presented in *The cost of murder*, in *The Tennessean*. Retrieved 7/18/06 from <http://tennessean.com/apps/pbcs.dll/setion?category+NEWS1302>

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